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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3157
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1444
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3492
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2878
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000715

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SUBJECT: KYRGYZ ELECTION: PROFILES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Ref: A. Bishkek 682

[1](#)B. Bishkek 668

[1](#)C. Bishkek 662

[1](#)D. Bishkek 651

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[1](#)1. (U) On June 18, the official campaign period began for the July 23 Kyrgyz presidential election. There are six registered candidates: incumbent President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, opposition politicians Almazbek Atambayev and Temir Sariyev, well-known psychiatrist Jenishbek Nazaraliyev, NGO leader Toktoayim Umetaliyeva, and political activist Nurlan Motuyev. Following are brief profiles of the candidates.

Kurmanbek Bakiyev

[1](#)2. (SBU) Kurmanbek Bakiyev, the current President of the Kyrgyz Republic, was born in 1949 in Masadan village in southern Jalalabad Oblast. His father served as an NKVD officer, and he has six brothers. (Note: The NKVD was a predecessor of the KGB. End note.) One brother is deceased, but the other five are all engaged in the political and economic life of the country. They include: Janysh, the chief of the Presidential Protective Service; Marat, the ambassador to Germany; Adyl, a high-level official in the Foreign Ministry; Kanybek, a local elected official in Jalalabad Oblast; and Akmat, a businessman in Jalalabad Oblast. Jusup, who was closely involved in the "Tulip Revolution" of March 2005, died in 2006. Kurmanbek Bakiyev is married to Tatyana Bakiyeva, an ethnic Russian, and they have two children, Marat and Maxim. Marat Bakiyev is a senior official in the State Committee on National Security, and is much less prominent than his younger brother Maxim, who is a businessman. Bakiyev is rumored to have a second, ethnic Kyrgyz wife, with whom he also has children.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Bakiyev graduated from Kuibyshev Polytechnic Institute with a degree in engineering in 1978. During the Soviet Union he primarily served as a manager and engineer in the electrical industry. In the early 1990s, he moved into politics, and became

the head of a local communist party branch. Bakiyev moved up the political ranks under President Akayev, eventually becoming Prime Minister in 2000. In March 2002, Bakiyev resigned after police brutally suppressed a protest rally in Aksy, Jalalabad Oblast. Following his resignation, he served as a Member of Parliament and became a leader in opposition politics. After President Akayev fled the country in the face of mass protests in March 2005, Bakiyev was selected as Acting President, and then went on to run for President in tandem with Felix Kulov in July 2005, winning 89 percent of the vote. The first years of Bakiyev's administration were turbulent, with frequent street protests and ongoing political battles with other opposition leaders. But Bakiyev consolidated his power with a Constitutional referendum and Parliamentary elections in late 2007, and since then, has faced no serious challenges to his power. On May 1, Bakiyev's political party Ak Jol nominated him for a second term.

Almazbek Atambayev

14. (SBU) Almazbek Atambayev was born in 1956 in Chui province. He graduated from the Moscow Academy of Management in 1980 with degrees in engineering and economics. He worked as an engineer and Communist Party functionary until the late 1980s, when he set up a private light manufacturing firm that has provided the financial backing for his political career. He founded the Social Democrat Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) in 1993, and represented that party in Parliament from 1995 to 2000. In March 2005, Atambayev and his party actively participated in the nationwide protests that brought down President Akayev. He initially declared his candidacy for the Presidency, but later pulled out of the race to endorse the Bakiyev-Kulov tandem.

15. (SBU) After Bakiyev's victory, Atambayev joined the cabinet as

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the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, but he resigned in protest in April 2006. He subsequently joined the opposition, publicly demanding constitutional reform and Bakiyev's resignation. Following several months of street protests, in March 2007 Atambayev agreed to serve as Bakiyev's Prime Minister, which many in the opposition saw as a defection. Atambayev was dismissed as Prime Minister in late November 2007. On April 25, 2009 Atambayev was chosen as the candidate of the United People's Movement (UPM), an alliance of opposition parties. He is married and has six children.

Temir Sariyev

16. (SBU) Temir Sariyev was born in 1963 in Chui Oblast, and graduated from the Kyrgyz National University with a degree in economics. During the Soviet Union, he was a party functionary, and in the early 1990s, he started Central Asia's first commodities exchange. He is now a part owner of a company that sells electrical equipment, as well as a shareholder in a consulting and design company. The income from these investments has supported his political career. Sariyev served in Parliament from 2000 to 2007, and in 2006 was elected deputy chairman of the SDPK. Following Atambayev's acceptance of the Prime Minister slot from President Bakiyev, Sariyev broke away from the SDPK and formed his own party, Ak Shumkar. Sariyev took his party into the UPM in December 2008, but broke away from it and announced that he would stand as a candidate for the Ak Shumkar party after the UPM nominated Atambayev as its presidential candidate. Sariyev is married and has two children.

Jenishbek Nazaraliyev

17. (SBU) Jenishbek Nazaraliyev was born in 1961 in Chui province. He is a well-known psychiatrist and founded a drug treatment center in Bishkek. Nazaraliyev was an ardent critic of President Akayev and his regime, and took part in the 2005 protests that forced Akayev to resign. He declared his intention to run in the 2005 Presidential Election, but like Atambayev, he withdrew his candidacy

to support the Bakiyev-Kulov tandem. Nazaraliyev is running as an independent candidate. He is married and has two children.

Toktoayim Umetalieva

18. (SBU) Toktoayim Umetalieva was born in 1962 in Talas Oblast. She as worked as a Bishkek City Council member, a journalist, and as a lecturer in physics. Since 2000, she has served as the Chairwoman of the Association of Non-Governmental and Non-Commercial Organizations, which professed its loyalty to the Akayev government during the political upheavals. In the 2005 Presidential Election, Umetalieva ran as an independent candidate and received 0.55% of vote. She is married and has three children.

Nurlan Motuyev

19. (SBU) Nurlan Motuyev was born in 1969 in Naryn Oblast. He is popularly known as the "coal king," due to his seizure of a government-owned coal mine during the chaos of spring 2005. He was jailed for embezzling funds from the mine, and released from prison in January 2008. Motuyev announced the formation of a Union of Muslims in late 2008, and garnered headlines by protesting against Israeli policies in Palestine, and against Manas Airbase. Motuyev previously lived in the United States, but was subsequently deported. His children still reside in the United States. The co-chair of the Union of Muslims, former Ombudsman Tursunbai Bakir uulu, had also announced his intention to run for President, but accepted an offer to be the Kyrgyz Ambassador to Malaysia.

Comment

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110. (SBU) These brief sketches hint at the deep connections linking the three leading candidates. Bakiyev, Atambayev, and Sariyev all began their careers as party functionaries, and all were active in organizing against President Akayev. They also share a history of making and breaking alliances based on immediate tactical considerations.

LITZENBERGER